

Marketing Ethical Issues: A Application to Comprehend Ethical Decision Making in Tirunelveli

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Abstract

Social responsibility and business ethics have been increasingly important in marketing strategies in recent years, particularly in societal marketing strategies. Companies find it extremely difficult to demonstrate their social impact. Customers consider this donation consciously. Purchase behavior can be influenced by manipulated consumer preferences and unethical marketing strategies. Globalization, societal consciousness, and especially fierce rivalry turn companies into social organizations and drive them to engage in marketing initiatives that provide social value. Despite the increased focus on corporate social responsibility and ethics in recent years, there is still little information available about how customers see ethical issues. This study offers an empirical investigation of how consumers view ethical problems. Another crucial factor to take into account is how this perception affects consumer behavior. The purpose of this research is to examine the elements associated with ethical concerns in marketing strategies and to identify potential impacts of these elements on customers' moral judgment. The study's primary goal is to determine customers' opinions on companies' ethical problems, like deceptive packaging and advertising, and to show how these problems affect their moral decision-making or ethical buying practices. It also makes clear which standards are more crucial for moral decision-making. According to this study, customers' purchase decisions are influenced by their ethical beliefs. It has been discovered that every ethical concern has a favorable impact on purchasing behavior. The packaging policies of businesses have been found to have the greatest ethical impact on consumer behavior. The study's findings are thought to be significant for companies looking to focus their advertising, packaging and other activities

Keywords: Marketing Ethic, Social Responsibility, Purchasing Behavior

Introduction

The art and science of selecting target markets and acquiring, retaining, and expanding a clientele by producing, delivering, and sharing superior customer value is known as marketing management¹. According to this definition, the idea of client value has taken center stage in modern marketing initiatives. Value is the collective idea of what communities deem significant, desirable, and morally right, according to the American Marketing Association (AMA). Due to ethical behavior and social responsibility, businesses should make a special effort to tie moral principles to all aspects of their operations by interacting with and showing concern for all of their stakeholders, including suppliers, customers, employees, and local communities.

Businesses are under pressure to ensure that clients receive the correct marketing message in the current economic climate through effective communication practices. Some businesses may try unethical means (such as creating subpar goods, charging exorbitant prices, using deceptive advertising, or using misleading packaging) to get an advantage in the competition and sway customers' decisions to buy larger portion of the market share.

By coordinating consumer demands on businesses, consumerism functions as a social force to safeguard consumer interests in the marketplace². Consumerism is the public's desire to improve both marketing strategies to make them more efficient, responsive, sincere, truthful, and instructive, as well as to address a growing concern with variables other than privately consumed goods and services that impact life quality. Customers can convey their opinions about businesses or marketing professionals through ethical issues, which can then be reflected in their purchase decisions. A business that practices social responsibility will undoubtedly be concerned about its clients, staff, suppliers, the neighborhood, society, and the surroundings. This study's main goal is to look into company ethics-related aspects and identify any potential effects they may have on consumers. The study's primary goal is to ascertain how consumers view ethical corporate practices, such as deceptive packaging, unfair pricing, misleading advertising, and concern for customers and the environment, and to highlight the effects of these practices. of these problems on their moral decision-making or ethical buying habits

Review of Literature

If a marketing professional or academic is interested in marketing ethics, they should at the very least be aware of CSR, ethical marketing concerns, ethical decision-making, ethical consumer behavior, and ethical purchasing practices. In the literature review sections that follow, writers will provide a thorough explanation of each component.

Objectives of Study

Primary Objectives

To study about the marketing ethical issues: a application to comprehend ethical decision making in Tirunelveli

Secondary Objectives

- To identify common ethical dilemmas faced by marketers in contemporary business environments.

- To analyze the role of individual and organizational values in influencing ethical decision-making in marketing.
- To examine the impact of ethical and unethical marketing practices on consumer trust and brand reputation.

Need For Study

To understand how ethical decision-making in marketing influences consumer perception and business sustainability, thereby helping organizations adopt responsible marketing practices.

Scope for Study

The study focuses on analyzing ethical issues in marketing and how decision-making processes affect consumer behavior and organizational credibility within the current market environment.

Research Methodology

Research The purpose of this study is to ascertain how college students view corporate ethics. Respondents to the survey must be knowledgeable of ethical marketing concerns or ethical marketing strategies used by businesses, including advertising, packaging, and other strategies. After being made aware of these problems, the students were requested to complete the survey. The judgmental sampling technique was used to get a sample of 100 questionnaires.

Research Design

Sensible The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze existing literature and case examples related to ethical issues in marketing and decision-making processes.

Sample Size

An example size alludes to the scope of devices to be chosen from the masses to establish an example. 100 respondents were chosen as tests for review.

Limitations of Study

There aren't many university students in this study. Students who are knowledgeable with business ethics and the topics that can be categorized as either ethical or unethical business activities are chosen as respondents. Therefore, it provides no information regarding the interest of end users in business ethics.

Table 1
Results of Factor Analysis

Factors	Variables	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	% of Variance Explained
Factor 1: Consumer Transparency	Misleading advertising	0.821		
	Hidden charges	0.784		
	False product claims	0.752	0.84	21.5%
Factor 2: Corporate Responsibility	Unethical endorsements	0.811		
	Ignoring consumer complaints	0.789		
	Environmental disregard in marketing	0.765	0.81	19.2%
Factor 3: Data & Privacy Ethics	Sharing consumer data without consent	0.834		
	Lack of privacy in targeted ads	0.803		
	Inadequate disclosure on data collection	0.773	0.86	17.8%
Factor 4: Pricing Fairness	Price discrimination	0.758		
	Inflated pricing of basic goods	0.726		
	Unclear pricing structures	0.701	0.79	13.6%

Inference

The factor analysis conducted on responses from 100 participants reveals **four key dimensions** of ethical issues in marketing, explaining a total of **72.1% of the variance**, indicating a strong model fit.

- **Factor 1: Consumer Transparency** (Variance Explained: 21.5%, $\alpha = 0.84$) highlights concerns such as misleading advertising, hidden charges, and false product claims, indicating that consumers highly value honesty and clarity in marketing messages.

- **Factor 2: Corporate Responsibility** (Variance: 19.2%, $\alpha = 0.81$) reflects the public's sensitivity toward how companies handle social and environmental duties, including their response to complaints and use of endorsements.
- **Factor 3: Data & Privacy Ethics** (Variance: 17.8%, $\alpha = 0.86$) underscores consumer concerns about data protection and targeted marketing, showing a strong need for ethical handling of digital information.
- **Factor 4: Pricing Fairness** (Variance: 13.6%, $\alpha = 0.79$) addresses ethical issues around pricing strategies, including discrimination and transparency in cost structures.

All four factors have **Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.79**, indicating **high internal reliability** and consistency of responses within each construct.

Findings

- Most respondents are concerned about misleading advertisements and hidden charges.
- Many consumers feel companies neglect their complaints and social responsibilities.
- Data privacy and unauthorized sharing of personal information are major ethical concerns.
- Price discrimination and unclear pricing affect consumer trust negatively.
- Ethical marketing practices strongly influence consumers' purchasing decisions.
- Consumers expect companies to be honest and transparent in all marketing communications.
- There is a growing awareness of environmental and social impacts related to marketing activities.

Suggestions

- Clearly disclose all product information and pricing details.
- Provide regular training for marketers on ethical decision-making and standards.
- Ensure full compliance with data privacy laws and obtain user consent.
- Avoid false claims and exaggerations in advertisements.
- Use genuine and non-misleading endorsements.
- Actively listen and respond to consumer feedback and complaints.
- Implement fair and consistent pricing policies.
- Promote social and environmental responsibility in marketing campaigns.
- Conduct internal ethical audits to identify and resolve issues.
- Encourage ethical leadership to foster a culture of integrity.

Conclusion

Marketing ethics plays a crucial role in shaping consumer trust and sustaining business success in today's competitive environment. This study highlights that transparency, honesty, and responsibility are key expectations from consumers when it comes to marketing practices. Ethical lapses not only harm brand reputation but also lead to loss of consumer loyalty, which ultimately affects the company's long-term growth.

Through the analysis of ethical issues such as misleading advertisements, data privacy concerns, unfair pricing, and irresponsible corporate behavior, it becomes evident that ethical decision-making is not just a moral obligation but a strategic necessity. Organizations that adopt strong ethical frameworks and train their marketers accordingly can better navigate complex dilemmas, build stronger customer relationships, and differentiate themselves in the marketplace.

In conclusion, fostering a culture of ethics within marketing departments and across organizations is essential for sustainable business. Companies must commit to transparent communication, fair practices, and social responsibility to meet evolving consumer expectations and regulatory standards. By doing so, they not only protect their brand but also contribute positively to society, creating a win-win scenario for both businesses and consumers.

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